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was a thorough student of history, a man acquainted with affairs, a man of the world, a man of letters capable of acute literary criticism.

It is as such a man that the first volume of his letters reveal him. Seldom in epistolary literature is so much strength joined with so much sanity and so much charm as in the case of Acton's correspondence. His ideas, always deeply based, often original, not seldom challenging, are the expression of a personality that has acquired an exceptional degree of unity. The ideas themselves, in many cases, seem particularly adapted to a time in which men are being compelled by the terrible logic of war to take stock of their ethical conceptions and to view the whole of life's problems in a realistic and at the same time an earnestly moral or religious light.

CAMPAIGNS AND INTERVALS. By Jean Giraudoux. Translated by Elizabeth S. Sergeant. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918.

Looking at the war in certain large and, in a sense, conventional ways we can all after a fashion understand it. As a moral phenomenon, as a military event, as a huge catastrophe, it may be more or less clearly grasped with the aid of principles, maps, or statistics. But besides wanting to understand the war in the abstract, people passionately desire to appreciate it as experience.

Now the question that every one wants to have answered with respect to any experience in the least out of the ordinary—the question, “Just how did it seem?”—is the hardest of all questions to answer satisfactorily. Most men simply cannot answer it at all. Their replies consist of irrelevant details or conventional ideas. If any one even for a moment succeeds in describing an experience unconventionally, fully, and truly, the appreciative hearer rejoices.

Obviously the experiences of war, as they present themselves to an impressible and reasonable mind, must seem shockingly incoherent. War breaks up old coherences, creates new associations. Events never before thought of in the same category occur together or in sequence. Thoughts or emotions that never in time of peace had even a bowing acquaintance with each other are joined in a close embrace. War experiences must be therefore the hardest experiences of all for the conscious impressionist—the soldier who is also a skilled writer—to describe adequately to those unconscious impressionists, his questioners. They are a dull, gaping lot, these questioners, for we are all dull when it comes to understanding one another: it requires something like genius to make one's inner sense of a thing plain to the most intelligent and friendly soul. But the questioners are really in earnest. They are worth enlightening; and in order that they may be enlightened they must be made to feel not only the strangeness, the incongruity of things as they appear to the soldier, but their oneness as experience, their seeming coherence, their dreamlike plausibility.

Perhaps no more sincere, more exact, more unconventional or more various record of war impressions was ever written than that which Jean Giraudoux has given us in his book *Campaigns and Intervals*. The effect of many passages of this record is so simple and so

strong as to remind us of the work of Stephen Crane. But *Campaigns and Intervals* is not, of course, as is *The Red Badge of Courage*, a one-idea-ed book: it is not a study merely of one chain of events or of one emotion. It is both more delicate and more versatile than Crane's masterpiece; and the fact that it records real instead of imaginary occurrences, increases both one's estimation of its value and one's admiration for the art with which it is executed.

How do sensitive, civilized men feel in the hour of waiting for the great ordeal? Here is M. Giraudoux's answer or a part of it: "But chiefly, without respite, we think of the first wounded and the first dead of the battalion. All the mental power we have stumbles sharply over this first corpse. We understand the second, and the third, and toward the hundredth we ourselves stretch our stark length on the ground; but suddenly, in spite of us, the first dead whom we have finally laid out in our minds comes back to life, scrambles to his feet, and the whole thing has to be done over again. When a soldier who is setting a match to his pipe lights up his face for an instant, we tremble for him as if he were flashing a signal to death. Our shoulders slump; age comes upon us. Restlessly we wander up and down in this darkness which makes victory seem scarcely more desirable than morning. '*C'est toi?*' 'Yes, it's I,' comes the tremulous answer, out of a deep courage. . . ."

Sometimes, too, the author mingles psychology with spectacular bits of description and with humorous observation in a manner that produces an astonishingly complete and convincing picture of the reality. The following description of a group of refugees, though characteristic, is by no means an exceptional instance:

"They all carry, either in cages or on leash, the animals which make the best fugitives: dogs, canaries, cats. In every carriage, too, is the object that would have been saved in case of fire, or else—today a bond of union—the one that would have been quarreled over in a division of property; a card-table, suspended like a goat with its feet tied together, or a phonograph. Now comes a hair-dresser with his waxen heads. Now some poor old people with their fixed attachments—an old woman in her armchair, an old man on his camp-stool. Some fresh, plump women in waterproofs, who have taken time to slip on their best chemises, but not to tie up the pink ribbons, which flutter in the breeze."

Is there in this series of impressions, one may ask, any unity beyond that which is produced by the hanging-together of the impressions themselves? Most certainly there is: A certain steadiness, a certain "lucidity of soul" is manifest through the whole book. Without attempting in the least to disengage the ethical or spiritual elements from the human spectacle, M. Giraudoux enables us to perceive the nobility of human nature as represented in the French civilian turned soldier: he lets us see that this soldier, strangely and sometimes absurdly affected as he is by the terrors and the incongruities of the war, has a soul.

The translator has done her work so well that one scarcely has occasion to remember that the book was not originally written in English.